



## Announcement

### VEF Fellowship Program for 2012

#### **IMPORTANT NOTICE ABOUT THE GRE TEST REGISTRATION**

- 1. Please register for the Graduate Record Exam (GRE) General Test as soon as possible.***
- 2. You can register for the GRE General Test at the Educational Testing Service (ETS) website: [www.ets.org](http://www.ets.org)***
- 3. You can list the Vietnam Education Foundation code of 8559 on the GRE registration form as one of the institutions to receive your official GRE score report.***

The Vietnam Education Foundation (VEF) is pleased to announce the 2012 VEF Fellowship Program. The Fellowship application and selection process is open, competitive, and transparent. Applicants do not need to pay any fees to anyone in order to apply or be considered for a VEF Fellowship. Winners are chosen based on individual merit, including academic performance and preparation, intellectual capabilities, English proficiency, and the potential for contribution to scientific education and research.

VEF expects to award approximately 45 Fellowships to Vietnamese nationals to begin graduate studies in the United States in the fall of 2012. The recipients are referred to as the VEF Fellowship 2012 Cohort. Please note that **VEF only accepts online applications.**

#### **1. Qualified Fields of Study**

VEF seeks highly qualified applicants interested in **pursuing a Ph.D. or master's degree at leading universities in the United States in the major disciplines of sciences** (natural, physical, and environmental), **mathematics, medicine** (such as public health, epidemiology, and immunology), **engineering, and technology** (including information technology). Fields include the basic sciences, such as, biology, chemistry, and physics, as well as agricultural science and computer science. Priority will be given to applicants, whose field of study focuses on climate change (environmental sciences) or on nuclear energy, provided that all other qualifications are equal.

## **2. Eligibility of VEF Employees and VEF Contracted Agency Employees**

PLEASE NOTE the following VEF policy regarding *eligibility of VEF employees and VEF contracted agency employees in Vietnam and in the United States*.

- Employees of VEF, including contractor employees, and their immediate families, are ineligible for VEF Fellowships, Visiting Scholar Grants, and U.S. Faculty Scholar Grants for a period ending one year following termination of such employment.
- If a former employee or contractor employee of VEF is otherwise eligible and chooses to apply for a VEF Fellowship, Visiting Scholar Grant, or U.S. Faculty Scholar Grant after the one year period, the VEF Board of Directors must approve the submission of such an application.
- Employees of private and public agencies (excluding educational institutions) under contract to VEF to perform administrative or screening services on behalf of the VEF Fellowship, Visiting Scholar, and/or U.S. Faculty Scholar Programs are ineligible for VEF Fellowships, Visiting Scholar Grants, and U.S. Faculty Scholar Grants for a period ending one year following the termination of their services for VEF.

## **3. Application and Selection Process of VEF Fellows**

VEF Fellowship applicants **may apply by using one of two options, Process A or Process B**. The former is for applicants, who have not yet been admitted to a U.S. university graduate program, while the latter is for applicants, who have already received admission to a U.S. university graduate program. Both Processes A and B are described below.

## **4. Pre-Departure Orientation (PDO)**

VEF will organize a 5-day PDO on June 8-12, 2012, before the Fellows depart for the United States, to inform Fellows about important issues regarding their Fellowship, including academic matters, cultural differences, financial arrangements, and legal issues related to their immigration status. Included in the PDO is an outdoor Team Building event, which usually involves one day of camping. During the PDO, official Fellowship documents and immigration documents will be given to the Fellows. It is **mandatory that all VEF Fellows participate** in the PDO. VEF Fellows will need to plan ahead and assure that they are able to attend the PDO as a requirement in order to receive a VEF Fellowship.

**PROCESS A AND PROCESS B ARE DESCRIBED BELOW.**

# PROCESS A

## APPLICATION PERIOD- Process A

Applications will be available ONLY online ([online applications](#))

**ONLY from 8:00 a.m., February 10, 2011,**

**to 8:00 a.m., April 10, 2011 (Vietnam time zone).**

### I. Eligibility

In order to apply, an applicant must meet the all of the following minimum requirements:

- A. **VIETNAMESE by citizenship** and not a permanent resident of Vietnam or a permanent resident or citizen of any other country.
- B. **College graduate** with at least a Bachelor's degree in a field of science or technology fields acceptable to VEF (See Item #1 above, *Qualified Fields of Study*) or college juniors (3rd or 4th year) or seniors (final year students), who will graduate with such a degree by July 2012.
- C. **GPA. Overall Grade Point Average (GPA)** from a college/university with **at least 7.0/10.0**. Applicants ONLY with an undergraduate degree must have at least a GPA of 7.0/10.0. Applicants with an undergraduate GPA from 6.5/10.0 to 7.0/10.0 are eligible to apply ONLY if they have a master's degree with a GPA of at least 7.0/10.0 in the same field as the intended field of study. Grades on other scales must be converted into a 10-point scale according to VEF guidelines. A grade conversion scale is available at the VEF website ([http://www.vef.gov/download/conversion\\_table.htm](http://www.vef.gov/download/conversion_table.htm))
- D. **English Language Proficiency**. The applicant must demonstrate sufficient proficiency in the English language. Any one of the following means is acceptable to demonstrate proficiency.
  1. **TOEFL**. A Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) score no older than one year from the date of the opening of the online application, specifically nothing earlier than February 10, 2010, of **at least 500 on the Paper-Based Test (PBT)** (either the International or Institutional exam is acceptable), which is equivalent to 173 on the Computer-Based Test (CBT) and 61 on the Internet-Based Test (iBT).

Applicants are encouraged to take the International TOEFL instead of the Institutional TOEFL in order to have a valid score in hand when applying to U.S. universities, which do not accept an Institutional TOEFL score. Also, please be aware that most U.S. university graduate schools require an International TOEFL

score of 550 or higher. Hence, candidates are encouraged to retake the TOEFL exam even after passing the VEF interview in order to increase their chances of getting university admission, particularly to competitive universities.

The official ETS website ([www.ets.org/toefl](http://www.ets.org/toefl)) provides information about the TOEFL test including format, scores, registration, practice materials, and locations of testing centers in Vietnam and test dates. Please contact IIG Vietnam at (84-4) 3773 2411 or visit their website: [www.toefl.com.vn](http://www.toefl.com.vn) for more information about the test.

2. **IELTS**. An acceptable alternative to the TOEFL exam is the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) exam. A **minimum score of 6.5** on an IELTS exam no older than one year from the date of the opening of the online application, specifically nothing earlier than February 10, 2010, is necessary to apply for a VEF Fellowship. For more information, please visit the IELTS website: <http://www.ielts.org/>.
  3. **Degree from an English-speaking country**. An acceptable alternative to the TOEFL or IELTS test is a degree from an English-speaking country. The applicant would need to demonstrate that s/he is studying for a Bachelor's or master's degree in, or has a recent university Bachelor's or Master's degree (not more than two years old at the time of applying for the VEF Fellowship) from, a university that conducts all courses in English in any of the following English-speaking countries: Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom (England, Ireland, Scotland or Wales), or the United States. The evidence of degree completion from such a university is sufficient evidence of English language proficiency for VEF. Please be aware that U.S. universities may still require an official International TOEFL or IELTS score to apply to graduate schools.
- E. **GRE (Graduate Record Examination)**. To be guaranteed an interview if a candidate becomes a finalist for the VEF Fellowship, the applicant must achieve a **combined score (quantitative plus verbal) of at least 1000** on the GRE General Test (either Paper-Based Test or Computer-Based Test) no older than five years from August 1, 2012, because the GRE is only valid for 5 years. Specifically, the GRE test scores that you submit can be no older than August 1, 2007. VEF only accepts the official GRE score report. All applicants must provide the results of the GRE General Test. The following provides specific details about the GRE tests.
1. **Reimbursement for GRE Test fee**. VEF will reimburse the GRE General Test fee to all VEF Fellowship award recipients, who achieve a combined score (quantitative plus verbal) of at least 1150. The award will be given at the PDO in June 2012. Submission of GRE test fee receipts are required in order to get the reimbursement.

2. From now until April 10, 2011, three paper-based GRE General Tests will be held in Vietnam as follows:

Test Dates (mm/dd/yyyy)	Regular Registration Deadline (mm/dd/yyyy)	Late Registration Deadline ( <i>Online registration only</i> ) (mm/dd/yyyy)	Scores by Phone Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Approximate Score Report Mailing Date and View Scores Online (mm/dd/yyyy)
10/23/2010	09/10/2010	09/17/2010	11/22/2010	12/03/2010
11/20/2010	10/08/2010	10/15/2010	12/20/2010	12/31/2010
02/12/2011	12/31/2010	01/07/2011	03/14/2011	03/25/2011

3. The official ETS website ([www.ets.org/gre](http://www.ets.org/gre)) provides information about the GRE test, including format, scores, registration, practice materials, and locations of testing centers and test dates in Vietnam. Please also visit the website of the Institute of International Education (IIE) in Vietnam ([www.iievn.org](http://www.iievn.org)) for more detailed information on the GRE paper-based Tests.

## II. Online Applications

*To prepare for the VEF Fellowship online applications, applicants must have the following information and documents ready:*

- A. **UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE CERTIFICATE AND TRANSCRIPTS & GRADUATE DEGREE CERTIFICATE AND TRANSCRIPTS (the latter only if applicable)**. Applicants are required to submit evidence of completion of an undergraduate degree (for college graduates) and graduate degree (if applicable), such as a diploma, or certification from the current university (for juniors and seniors) as well as transcripts from undergraduate studies and from graduate studies, if applicable. These documents must be translated into English with an official notarization or with an official school stamp (see under item **I. Eligibility** above).
- B. **EVIDENCE OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY**. (see under item **I. Eligibility** above)
- C. **GRE SCORE**. (see under item **I. Eligibility** above)
- D. **STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**. Each applicant must prepare a Statement of Purpose, which is a narrative essay that includes information about the applicant's educational

background, practical experience, special interests, and career goals. The essay should provide a description of the study/research objectives and give three significant reasons for wanting to pursue a graduate degree program in the United States on a VEF Fellowship. Objectives must be stated clearly with explanations about how a VEF Fellowship would help the applicant achieve his/her stated objectives. In addition, the applicant must also describe how he/she would help fulfill the mission of VEF as a Fellowship recipient. The Statement of Purpose should also include a description of what special role the applicant sees that he/she would play as a VEF Fellow and a description of the applicant's intended future plans upon returning to Vietnam at the completion of the program of study.

The essay must be well-organized and composed in excellent English and must not be more than two A4 pages single-spaced, using the Times New Roman font of size 12. The quality and content of this essay are extremely important factors in determining the applicant's candidacy for a VEF Fellowship. Below are some suggestions of information to include:

#### **Work and Research Experience**

- Narrative of work and research experience.
- Description of a scientific challenge that the applicant faced and how s/he managed and solved that challenge, including the lessons learned. This can be a success or a failure, but it must be memorable.

#### **Future Plans**

- Desired fields of study (several specific subjects and general research interests) ranked according to priority.
- Objectives and impact of one's proposed research or project(s).
- Contribution of the proposed research or project(s) to the development of science and technology in Vietnam.

E. **THREE LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION/REFERENCE**. Three letters of recommendation, also known as letters of reference, must be submitted from the applicant's professors, under whom the applicant has studied or pursued research, or from supervisors, who have supervised the applicant's work related to his/her proposed field of study. Recommendation letters must be from individuals who have supervised the applicant's academic or professional work for at least two years and who know the applicant's academic and professional performance very well. The letters need to be written in English, on official letterhead with the signature of the recommender. These letters should be distinctly different. Importantly, each writer should demonstrate in his/her letter a very good understanding of the applicant by giving specific examples of interactions and situations observed by the writer that exemplify the outstanding qualities of the applicant.

F. **U.S. UNIVERSITIES**. The applicant must indicate **five (5) U.S. universities** and the relevant departments in which s/he wishes to study, including the major within that department, while providing the reasons why each university is a preferred choice. In

addition, the applicant must supply the names and titles of **two (2) research advisors/professors with whom s/he wishes to study at each university**, including the reason why the particular advisors/professors were selected. To meet this requirement, VEF advises applicants to **research U.S. universities, the relevant departments and majors, and potential research advisors/professors** well in advance of the application period. As one source of information, the VEF Alliance schools, listed at the VEF website, are top-level U.S. universities that accept VEF financial terms and conditions. In addition, the applicant should utilize the EducationUSA advising centers (located in the U.S. Embassy in Hanoi and in the U.S. Consulate General in Ho Chi Minh City) and their resources to find the universities that best fit his/her academic needs and areas of study.

**VERY IMPORTANT:** *Please check carefully the eligibility requirements and fulfill all the requirements listed above by completing the online application form and submitting all required documents before the application deadline. All information must be submitted by the VEF application deadline. Any missing information or documents will result in an automatic rejection of the application. VEF cannot accept incomplete applications and cannot extend the deadline.*

### **III. Selection Process**

**To obtain a VEF Fellowship award**, an applicant must **succeed in all three rounds** of the selection process, as described below:

#### **ROUND ONE – Qualification Screening**

During the application period as indicated above, applicants submit [online applications](#). After a screening process by VEF to assure eligibility, a technical review is conducted by the U.S. National Academies to determine the significance of the applicant's achievements and to determine the applicant's potential to make a contribution to the sciences as shown by his/her past academic performance, academic preparation, test results, prior research and work experience, honors and recognition, and statement of purpose. Qualified applicants, recommended by the National Academies, will be invited to round two of the application process.

#### **ROUND TWO – Oral Exam/Interview**

In August 2011, U.S. scientists and professors, organized by the U.S. National Academies, will carry out Oral Exams/Interviews. The Oral Exam/Interview is conducted in English and lasts up to 45 minutes. The U.S. scientists and professors will recommend to VEF the candidates, judged to be qualified for a VEF Fellowship, and will confirm the universities they deem appropriate for the candidates. At this point, the recommended candidates are classified as VEF *nominees*. Only VEF nominees are invited to round three of the application process.

### **ROUND THREE – Admission to a U.S. University**

In the Fall 2011, VEF helps the nominees to apply to five (5) leading U.S. universities recommended by the U.S. scientists and professors, as described above, which include universities chosen by the nominees and which are approved by the National Academies and VEF. These universities must belong to the VEF Alliance (see the list at the VEF website) or must be a leading U.S. graduate program, which must acknowledge acceptance of the VEF financial terms. Financial support terms are available under “VEF Fellowship Program/Resources for Applicants” at the VEF website ([http://home.vef.gov/download/Basic\\_Financial\\_Terms\\_of\\_VEF\\_fellowship\\_grant.pdf](http://home.vef.gov/download/Basic_Financial_Terms_of_VEF_fellowship_grant.pdf)). VEF supports applications to the five approved universities by paying for the following: (1) Fees for GRE and TOEFL score reports; (2) GRE Subject Tests, if required by any of the five approved universities; and (3) application fees for non-Alliance universities among these five approved universities.

To help candidates and if they agree, contact and application information for all nominees as well as for interviewees, who were recommended for graduate school but were not recommended as Fellowship nominees, is sent to all VEF Alliance universities so that the universities may solicit these individuals to apply. The universities may offer their own full funding, if they wish.

Nominees must inform VEF as soon as they get accepted by a U.S. university. **By March 26, 2012, all nominees must submit to VEF their university admission letters** as well as a letter from each university that acknowledges the acceptance of the VEF financial support terms and a VEF form completed by the university that delineates finances over the duration of the degree program, whether the university is a member of the VEF Alliance or not. Nominees will indicate their priorities by listing which universities they wish to attend in priority order as #1, # 2, etc. With input from the U.S. National Academies, VEF will then decide the best university for the nominee to attend. At this point, the qualified nominees are eligible for VEF Fellowship awards.

### **FELLOWSHIP AWARDS**

The final decisions about the VEF Fellowship awards will be made by the VEF Board of Directors in April 2012. Upon approval by the VEF Board of Directors, the nominees are designated as VEF Fellows.

## PROCESS B

### APPLICATION PERIOD- Process B

Applications will be available ONLY online ([online applications](#))

ONLY from 8:00 a.m., February 10, 2012,  
to 8:00 a.m., March 10, 2012 (Vietnam time zone).

#### I. Eligibility

In order to apply, an applicant must meet the following minimum requirements:

- A. **VIETNAMESE by citizenship** and not a permanent resident of Vietnam or a permanent resident or citizen of any other country.
- B. **College graduate** with at least a Bachelor's degree in a field of science or technology fields acceptable to VEF (See Item #1 above, *Qualified Fields of Study*) or college juniors (3rd or 4th year) or seniors (final year students), who will graduate with such a degree by July 2012.
- C. **GPA. Overall Grade Point Average (GPA)** from a college/university with **at least 7.0/10.0**. Applicants ONLY with an undergraduate degree must have at least a GPA of 7.0/10.0. Applicants with an undergraduate GPA from 6.5/10.0 to 7.0/10.0 are eligible to apply ONLY if they have a master's degree with a GPA of at least 7.0/10.0 in the same field as the intended field of study. Grades on other scales must be converted into a 10-point scale according to VEF guidelines. A grade conversion scale is available at the VEF website ([http://www.vef.gov/download/conversion\\_table.htm](http://www.vef.gov/download/conversion_table.htm))
- D. **Gained official graduate admission** to a VEF Alliance school or to a leading U.S. graduate school, which accepts VEF's financial support terms, in a field acceptable to VEF (See Item #1, *Qualified Fields of Study*, above). Full and unconditional admission is required.

#### II. Online Applications

To prepare for the [online applications](#), applicants must have the following documents ready:

- A. TRANSCRIPTS.** Applicants are required to prepare transcripts from undergraduate studies and from graduate studies, if applicable, translated into English with an official notarization or with an official school stamp (see item **I. Eligibility** above).
- B. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE.** Each applicant must prepare a Statement of Purpose, which is a narrative essay that includes information about the applicant’s educational background, practical experience, special interests, and career goals. The essay should provide a description of the study/research objectives and give three significant reasons for wanting to pursue a graduate degree program in the United States on a VEF Fellowship. Objectives must be stated clearly with explanations about how a VEF Fellowship would help the applicant achieve his/her stated objectives. In addition, the applicant must also describe how he/she would help fulfill the mission of VEF as a Fellowship recipient. The Statement of Purpose should also include a description of what special role the applicant sees that he/she would play as a VEF Fellow and a description of the applicant’s intended future plans upon returning to Vietnam at the completion of the program of study.

The essay must be well-organized and composed in excellent English and must not be more than two A4 pages single-spaced, using the Times New Roman font of size 12. The quality and content of this essay are extremely important factors in determining the applicant’s candidacy for a VEF Fellowship. Below are some suggestions of information to include:

**Work and Research Experience**

- Narrative of work and research experience.
- Description of a scientific challenge that the applicant faced and how s/he managed and solved that challenge, including the lessons learned. This can be a success or a failure, but it must be memorable.

**Future Plans**

- Desired fields of study (several specific subjects and general research interests) ranked according to priority.
- Objectives and impact of one’s proposed research or project(s).
- Contribution of the proposed research or project(s) to the development of science and technology in Vietnam.

- C. ADMISSION LETTER.** Official letter of admission from a U.S. university, confirming full admission without any conditions, name of degree, level of study (Master’s or Ph.D.), department, and major within that department.

- D. ACCEPTANCE OF VEF FINANCIAL TERMS.** The admitting university must acknowledge in writing on university letterhead acceptance of the VEF financial terms and must complete a VEF form that delineates finances over the duration of the degree program. Financial support terms are available under “VEF Fellowship Program/Resources for Applicants” at the VEF website:  
([http://home.vef.gov/download/Basic\\_Financial\\_Terms\\_of\\_VEF\\_fellowship\\_grant.pdf](http://home.vef.gov/download/Basic_Financial_Terms_of_VEF_fellowship_grant.pdf)).

**VERY IMPORTANT:** *Please check carefully the eligibility requirements and fulfill all the requirements listed above by completing the online application form and submitting all required documents before the application deadline. All information must be submitted by the VEF application deadline. Any missing information or documents will result in an automatic rejection of the application. VEF cannot accept incomplete applications and cannot extend the deadline.*

### **III. Selection Process**

**To obtain a VEF Fellowship award,** a Process B applicant must **succeed in both rounds** of the selection process described below:

#### **ROUND ONE - Qualification Screening**

From February 10 to March 10, 2012, the VEF online application will be available. VEF will review applications from Process B applicants, who have been admitted for the Fall 2012 term to at least one leading graduate program in the United States in a field of study supported by VEF. Furthermore, whether the school is a member of the VEF Alliance or not, the school must acknowledge in writing the acceptance of the [VEF financial support terms](#) and must complete the VEF form that delineates finances over the duration of the degree program.

After a screening process by VEF to assure eligibility, a technical review is conducted by the U.S. National Academies to determine the significance of the applicant's achievements and to determine the applicant's potential to make a contribution to the sciences as shown by his/her past academic performance, test results, prior research and work experience, honors and recognition, and statement of purpose. Qualified applicants, recommended by the U.S. National Academies, will be invited to round two, which is the last and final round.

#### **ROUND TWO - Interview**

In late March 2012, applicants receiving a recommendation from the U.S. National Academies will be invited to a phone interview. Depending on the number of VEF Fellowships available for Process B candidates, the most highly qualified applicants will be recommended to the VEF Board of Directors for approval.

**FELLOWSHIP AWARDS**

The final decision on VEF Fellowship awards will be made by the VEF Board of Directors in April 2012. At this point, the recommended candidates will become VEF Fellows.

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*Note: The above information is provided as a guideline and is the intended VEF time-line of activities for the selection process for 2012. VEF reserves the right to make changes as circumstances require. Any changes will be posted ONLY on VEF's official website at [www.vef.gov](http://www.vef.gov) and, therefore, VEF advises applicants to check the VEF website regularly.*

*After obtaining the VEF Fellowship, all Fellows must strictly observe VEF rules and requirements or they may lose the Fellowship.*

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If you have any questions regarding the VEF 2012 Fellowship application and selection process, please e-mail [vef2012@vef.gov](mailto:vef2012@vef.gov), or phone VEF at (84-4) 3936 3670 in Hanoi, Vietnam.  
For more information on VEF and the VEF Fellowship Program, please visit the VEF website: [www.vef.gov](http://www.vef.gov)